

Teaneck Topics



An Official Publication of the Township of Teaneck

October 2004

In just a little less than 3 years, the world as we know it has dramatically changed. We are more aware of our vulnerabilities, more appreciative of our freedom, and more understanding that we have a personal responsibility for the safety of ourselves, our families, and our neighbors.

Disasters may come in many forms, i.e. natural hazards such as floods & hurricanes, technological & man-made hazards such as hazardous materials incidents, or household chemical emergencies.

We believe that each of us can take an active role in disaster preparedness. There are actions we can take to help protect ourselves, our families and our neighbors to reduce the impact an emergency has on our lives and deal with the

situation if an incident occurs near us. This newsletter has been prepared with general information on a variety of emergency preparedness topics. Please take the necessary time to review it with your family!

Should you desire more information, FEMA, the Federal Emergency Management Agency, has prepared an informative guide entitled *Are You Ready? A Guide to Citizen Preparedness*, which provides practical information on how you can prepare for any disaster. The guide is available on line from FEMA's website at www.fema.org. The State of New Jersey Domestic Security Task Force has also prepared a guide entitled *Plain Talk on Terrorism Preparedness*, which may be obtained from their website at www.NJHomelandSecurity.com.

YOUR EMERGENCY PLAN

Prior to an emergency, each household should create an emergency plan:

- Meet with your household members. Discuss with children the dangers of fire, severe weather, and other emergencies that can occur in Teaneck and the surrounding area.
- Teach household members to turn on the radio and/or television for impending storm or emergency situations.
- Instruct household members on what to do and where to go if an emergency occurs.
- Decide on two escape routes from each room, if possible. Practice getting out of each room in the dark.

HOUSEHOLD AND COMMUNITY EVACUATIONS

Pick two family meeting places:

1. A place near your home in case of a sudden emergency such as a fire.
2. A place outside of your neighborhood in case you become separated or can't return home. Everyone must know this address, phone number or location.
 - Pick one non-local friend or relative for household members to call if separated by an emergency. All household members must know your contact's phone number. Everyone should call this person and tell them where they are.
 - Know how to turn off the electricity, gas, and water. Do NOT turn anything off unless you are instructed to do so, or unless there is utility damage in your home. If you smell gas, go outside immediately and call 911.

Keep the gas tank in your vehicle above half full at all times.

STORM SAFETY

A wide range of natural disasters occurs within the United States every year. Natural disasters can have a devastating effect on you and your home. The Teaneck Fire Department and the Federal Emergency Management Agency's U.S. Fire Administration encourage you to use the following safety tips to help protect yourself, your family, and your home from the potential threat of fire during or after a storm. You can greatly reduce your chances of becoming a fire casualty by being able to identify potential hazards and following the outlined safety tips.

SOME TYPES OF FIRE RELATED HAZARDS PRESENT DURING AND AFTER A STORM

- Lightning associated with thunderstorms generates a variety of fire hazards. The power of lightning's electrical charge and intense heat can electrocute on contact, splitting trees and causing fires.
- Pools of water and even appliances can be electrically charged.
- Appliances that have been exposed to water can short and become a fire hazard.
- Generators are often used during power outages. Generators that are not properly used and maintained can be very hazardous.

CHEMICAL SAFETY

- Look for combustible liquids like gasoline, lighter fluid, and paint thinner that may have spilled. Thoroughly clean the spill and place containers in a well-ventilated area.
- Keep combustible liquids away from heat sources.

ELECTRICAL SAFETY

- If your home has sustained flood or water damage, and you can safely get to the main breaker or fuse box, turn off the power.
- Assume all wires on the ground are electrically charged. This includes cable TV feeds.
- Be aware of and avoid downed utility lines. Report downed or damaged power lines to the utility company or emergency services.
- Remove standing water, wet carpets, and furnishings. Air dry your home with good ventilation before restoring power.
- Have a licensed electrician check your home for damage.

GAS SAFETY

- Smell and listen for leaky gas connections. If you believe there is a gas leak, immediately leave the house and leave the door(s) open.
- Never strike a match. Any size flame can spark an explosion.
- Before turning the gas back on, have the gas system checked by a professional.

GENERATOR SAFETY

- Follow the manufacturer's instructions and guidelines when using generators.
- Use a generator or other fuel-powered machines outside the home, Carbon Monoxide fumes are odorless and can quickly overwhelm you indoors.
- Use the appropriate sized and type power cords to carry the electric load. Overloaded cords can overheat and cause fires.
- Never run cords under rugs or carpets where heat might build up or damage to a cord may go unnoticed.
- Never connect generators to another power source such as power lines. The reverse flow of electricity or 'back-feed' can electrocute an unsuspecting utility worker.

HEATING SAFETY

- Kerosene heaters may not be legal in your area and should only be used where approved by authorities.
- Do not use the kitchen oven range to heat your home. In addition to being a fire hazard, it can be a source of toxic fumes.
- Alternative heaters need their space. Keep anything combustible at least 3 feet away.
- Make sure your alternative heaters have 'tip switches'. These 'tip switches' are designed to automatically turn off the heater in the event they tip over.
- Only use the type of fuel recommended by the manufacturer and follow suggested guidelines.
- Never refill a space heater while it is operating or still hot.
- Refuel heaters only outdoors.
- Make sure wood stoves are properly installed and at least 3 feet away from combustible materials. Ensure they have the proper floor support and adequate ventilation.
- Use a glass or metal screen in front of your fireplace to prevent sparks from igniting nearby carpets, furniture, or other combustible items.

AND REMEMBER...

- Be careful when using candles. Keep the flame away from combustible objects and out of the reach of children.
- Some smoke alarms may be dependent on your home's electrical service and could be inoperative during a power outage. Check to see if your smoke alarm uses a back-up battery and install a new battery at least once a year.
- Smoke alarms should be installed on every level of your home.
- All smoke alarms should be tested monthly. All batteries should be replaced with new ones at least once a year.
- If there is a fire hydrant near your home, keep it clear of debris, snow, and vegetation for easy access by the Fire Department.

KEEPING FOOD SAFE DURING AN EMERGENCY

Did you know that a flood, fire, natural disaster, or the loss of power from high winds, snow, or ice could jeopardize the safety of your food? Knowing how to determine if food is safe and how to keep food safe will help minimize the potential loss of food and reduce the risk of foodborne illness. This fact sheet will help you make the right decisions for keeping your family safe during an emergency.

*The Food Safety and Inspection Service of the United States Department of Agriculture has developed the following “**ABCD’s**” of keeping food safe in an emergency:*

Always keep meat, poultry, fish and eggs refrigerated at or below 40 degrees F. and frozen food at or below 0 degrees F. This may be difficult when the power is out. Keep the refrigerator and freezer door closed as much as possible to maintain the cold temperature. The refrigerator will keep food safely cold for about 4 hours if it is unopened. A full freezer will hold the temperature for approximately 48 hours (24 hours if it is half full) if the door remains closed. Obtain dry or block ice to keep your refrigerator as cold as possible if the power is going to be out for a prolonged period of time. Fifty pounds of dry ice should hold an 18-cubic foot full freezer for 2 days. Plan ahead and know where dry ice and block ice can be purchased.

Be prepared for an emergency by having items on hand that don’t require refrigeration and can be eaten cold or heated on the outdoor grill. Shelf-stable food, boxed or canned milk, water and canned goods should be part of a planned emergency food supply. Make sure you have ready-to-use baby formula for infants and pet food. Remember to use these items and replace them from time to time. Be sure to keep a hand-held can opener for an emergency.

Consider what you can do ahead of time to store your food safely in an emergency. If you live in a location that could be affected by a flood, plan your food storage on shelves that will be safely out of the way of contaminated water. Coolers are a great help for keeping food cold if the power will be out for more than 4 hours – have a couple on hand along with frozen gel packs. When your freezer is not full, keep items close together – this helps the food stay cold longer.

Digital, dial, or instant-read food thermometers and appliance thermometers will help you know if the food is at safe temperatures. Keep appliance thermometers in the refrigerator and freezer at all times. When the power is out, an appliance thermometer will always indicate the temperature in the refrigerator and freezer no matter how long the power has been out. The refrigerator temperature should be 40 degrees F. or below; the freezer, 0 degrees F. or lower. If you’re not sure a particular food is cold enough, take its temperature with a food thermometer. For additional information on specific refrigerated or frozen food items, call Teaneck Health Department at 201-837-4824.

ARE YOUR HOUSE NUMBERS VISIBLE?

In an emergency, help cannot begin until the helpers can find the patient or address. Therefore, Teaneck has an ordinance that requires each building to prominently display its address. The address must be in permanent form, and expressed in Arabic numerals; Roman numerals or script are too hard to be deciphered at speed. The numerals must be displayed at least five feet above grade (to surmount snow or leaf piles), must be of contrasting color to their background, and must not be obstructed by shrubbery or holiday decorations. They must be easily seen by a person seated in a vehi-

cle at curbside. Since some buildings in Teaneck are addressed for one street, but face the side street, the address must be displayed on the side that is named in the address. All commercial buildings that have more than one entrance must have such numbers adjacent to each door. Please comply with this ordinance; when someone is hurt or seriously ill, their life could well depend on it.

Please contact the Teaneck Health Department if you have any questions at 201-837-4824.

PREPARE AN EMERGENCY KIT

*Store your kit in an easy to carry container such as a backpack or duffel bag.
Keep it in an easy to access location near an exterior door of your home.*

Your Kit Should Include:

- One gallon of water per person per day. Replace this every three months.
- Three day's supply of non-perishable food that can be eaten without cooking and a manual can opener. Replace stored food every six months.
- One blanket or sleeping bag with pillow per person.
- A first-aid kit with PRESCRIPTION MEDICATIONS.
- A battery powered radio, flashlight, and extra batteries for each.
- Special items for infant, elderly, or disabled household members.
- Toiletries, toothpaste, and other sanitation supplies.

HOLIDAY SAFETY

The winter holidays are a time for celebration, and that means more cooking, home decorating, entertaining, and an increased risk of fire due to heating equipment.

- In 1999, there were 370 **Christmas tree fires** in U.S. homes, resulting in 5 deaths, 60 injuries and \$15.7 million in direct property damage.
- During 1999, candles in U.S. homes caused an estimated 15,040 fires, 102 civilian deaths, 1,473 civilian injuries and \$278 million in direct property damage.
- Fourteen percent of the candle fires occurred in December, this is almost twice the 8% monthly average.
- In 11% of the December candle fires, the fires began when a decoration caught fire. This was true in only 2% of the fires during the rest of the year.

Source: NFPA's **One-Stop Data Shop**

Safety Tips:

Holiday Decorating & Lighting

- Use caution with holiday decorations and whenever possible, choose those made with flame-resistant, flame-retardant or non-combustible materials.
- Keep candles away from decorations and other combustible materials, and do not use candles to decorate Christmas trees.
- Purchase only lights and electrical decorations bearing the name of an independent testing lab, and follow the manufacturer's instructions for installation and maintenance.
- Carefully inspect new and previously used light

strings and replace damaged items before plugging lights in. Do not overload extension cords.

- Always unplug lights before replacing light bulbs or fuses.
- Don't mount lights in any way that can damage the cord's wire insulation (i.e., using clips, not nails).
- Keep children and pets away from light strings and electrical decorations.
- Turn off all light strings and decorations before leaving the house or going to bed.

Holiday Entertaining

- Unattended cooking is the leading cause of home fires in the U.S. When cooking for holiday visitors, remember to keep an eye on the range.
- Provide plenty of large, deep ashtrays and check them frequently. Cigarette butts can smolder in the trash and cause a fire, so completely douse cigarette butts with water before discarding, or flush them down the toilet.
- After a party, always check on, between and under upholstery and cushions and inside trash cans for cigarette butts that may be smoldering.
- Keep matches and lighters up high, out of sight and reach of children (preferably in a locked cabinet). When smokers visit your home, ask them to keep their smoking materials with them so young children do not touch them.
- Test your smoke alarms, and advise guests of your fire escapes.

The Teaneck Fire Department thanks the National Fire Protection Association, who we used for material in this article.

THE NATURE OF FIRE

Every day Americans experience the horror of fire. But most people don't understand fire. Only when we know the true nature of fire can we prepare ourselves and our families. Each year more than 4,000 Americans die and approximately 25,000 are injured in fires, many of which could be prevented.

Below are some simple facts that explain the particular characteristics of fire.

Fire is FAST!

There is little time!

In less than 30 seconds a small flame can get completely out of control and turn into a major fire. It only takes minutes for thick black smoke to fill a house. In minutes, a house can be engulfed in flames. Most fires occur in the home when people are asleep. If you wake up to a fire, you won't have time to grab valuables because fire spreads too quickly and the smoke is too thick. There is only time to escape.

Fire is HOT!

Heat is more threatening than flames.

A fire's heat alone can kill. Room temperatures in a fire can be 100 degrees at floor level and rise to 600 degrees at eye level. Inhaling this super hot air will scorch your lungs. This heat can melt clothes to your skin. In five minutes a room can get so hot that everything in it ignites at once: this is called flashover.

Fire is DARK!

Fire isn't bright, it's pitch black.

Fire starts bright, but quickly produces black smoke and complete darkness. If you wake up to

a fire you may be blinded, disoriented and unable to find your way around the home you've lived in for years.

Fire is DEADLY!

Smoke and toxic gases kill more people than flames do.

Fire uses up the oxygen you need and produces smoke and poisonous gases that kill. Breathing even small amounts of smoke and toxic gases can make you drowsy, disoriented and short of breath. The odorless, colorless fumes can lull you into a deep sleep before the flames reach your door. You may not wake up in time to escape.

Fire Safety Tips

In the event of a fire, remember time is the biggest enemy and every second counts!

Escape first, then call for help. Develop a home fire escape plan and designate a meeting place outside. Make sure everyone in the family knows two ways to escape from every room. Practice feeling your way out with your eyes closed. Never stand up in a fire, always crawl low under the smoke and try to keep your mouth covered. Never return to a burning building for any reason; it may cost you your life.

Finally, having a working smoke alarm dramatically increases your chances of surviving a fire. And remember to practice a home escape plan frequently with your family.

The United States Fire Administration (USFA), a division of the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), believes that fire deaths can be reduced by teaching people the basic facts about fire. The Teaneck Fire Department thanks them for their assistance.

PHONE SYSTEM FAILURE

WHAT WOULD YOU DO IF YOUR PHONE DIDN'T WORK AND SUDDENLY THERE WAS FIRE, SMOKE, A HEART ATTACK, A SEIZURE, A CAR WRECK, OR OTHER LIFE-OR-PROPERTY-THREATENING EMERGENCY OCCURRED? IF YOU ARE IN TEANECK, YOU CAN GET HELP IMMEDIATELY: PULL A FIRE ALARM BOX. Teaneck maintains over 300 publicly-accessible fire alarm boxes on strategic street corners and on the front of most major public and commercial buildings. They are painted red with white trim and are marked with decals for Fire or Fire/Emergency. **Anyone can use them at any time to report any fire, smoke, or any life-threatening emergency.** These boxes are 100%

independent of the telephone company lines, have their own back-up, and have quadruple safety back-up systems to make them disaster resistant. During recent telephone company outages, absolutely all of them have remained 100% in-service and available. They are monitored 24-7 for reliability. While some may look weather-beaten they all work.

Check the vicinity of your home or workplace for the location of the nearest fire alarm box. Teach your family about how and when to use the box. No person who honestly believes that an emergency exists will ever be penalized for pulling the box. *If you have a question, please call 201-837-2085 and ask for Deputy Chief Bauer or Capt. Verley.*

TEANECK SERVICE DIRECTORY

201 AREA CODE

Ambulance Corps837-2600	Detective Bureau837-2565
To Report a Medical Emergency911	Police Information837-2608
Animal Control Service - Weekdays837-4824	Police Records/Traffic837-2511
Evenings and Weekends837-2600	Youth Bureau833-0495
Building and Zoning837-4830	Public Works837-4842
Board of Adjustment837-4835	Engineer837-4837
Planning Board837-4835	Recycling Hotline837-4841
Emergency Management837-2600	Purchasing Department837-4815
Finance837-4816	Recreation837-7130
Fire Department837-2085	Youth Services837-7130
To Report a Fire Emergency911	Senior Services837-7130
Health and Human Services837-4824	Senior/Physically Challenged Van . . .837-7130
Social Services Coordinator837-4828	Tax Assessment837-4846
Library837-4171	Tax Collection837-4819
Municipal Court837-4850	Township Council837-4811
Police Department837-2600	Township Clerk837-4811
To Report a Police Emergency911	Township Manager837-4807
Community Policing837-8759	Vital Statistics837-4820

Website Address: www.teanecknjgov.org

Township of Teaneck

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